

brian willoughby, m.d.
408-1160 burrard st.,
vancouver, b.c. V6Z-2E8
tel.(604)669-1331

August 30, 1985

Harold E. Varmus, M.D.
Professor of Molecular Virology
Department of Microbiology and Immunology
University of California at San Francisco
San Francisco, CA 94143

Dear Dr. Varmus,

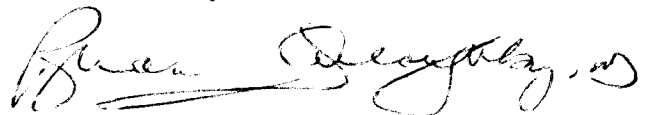
Thank you for your letter of August 12, 1985, which I just received this week. I have given your questions some thought, and have discussed with colleagues in our hospital AIDS Care Group.

It is both my personal opinion and was our group consensus as follows:

- Question #1. No. The term AIDS is not to be avoided at all costs.
- Question #2. The use of any euphemism such as XYZ virus is misleading in a taxonomic sense, and would be unlikely to effect any significant reduction in anxiety for individuals affected by it.
- Question #3. Yes, the euphemism, even though it may be misleading, will be equated with AIDS and hence not produce the desired reduction of anxiety.
- Question #4. Eponyms are ubiquitous in medicine, with many now understood by the lay public. I would expect that your committee may well recommend a name which contains more than one word and hence may be reduced to an eponym in practical usage. This is quite acceptable.

I hope this addresses the issues you wish. I look forward to the result of your deliberations as the present heterogeneity of terms does produce confusion for some people.

Yours sincerely,



Brian C. Willoughby, M.D., CCFP